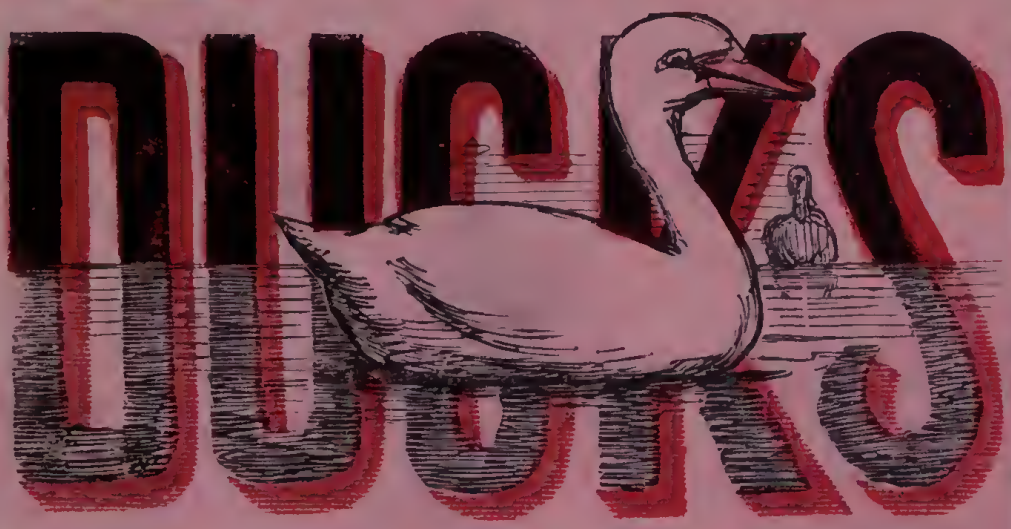
UNCLE TOBY'S SERIES.

DAME DUCK'S LECTURE



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DAME DUCK'S

FIRST LECTURE ON EDUCATION.

Old Mother Duck has hatched a brood
Of ducklings, small and callow:
Their little wings are short, their down
Is mottled gray and yellow.

There is a quiet little stream,
That runs into the moat,
Where tall green sedges spread their leaves,
And water-lilies float.

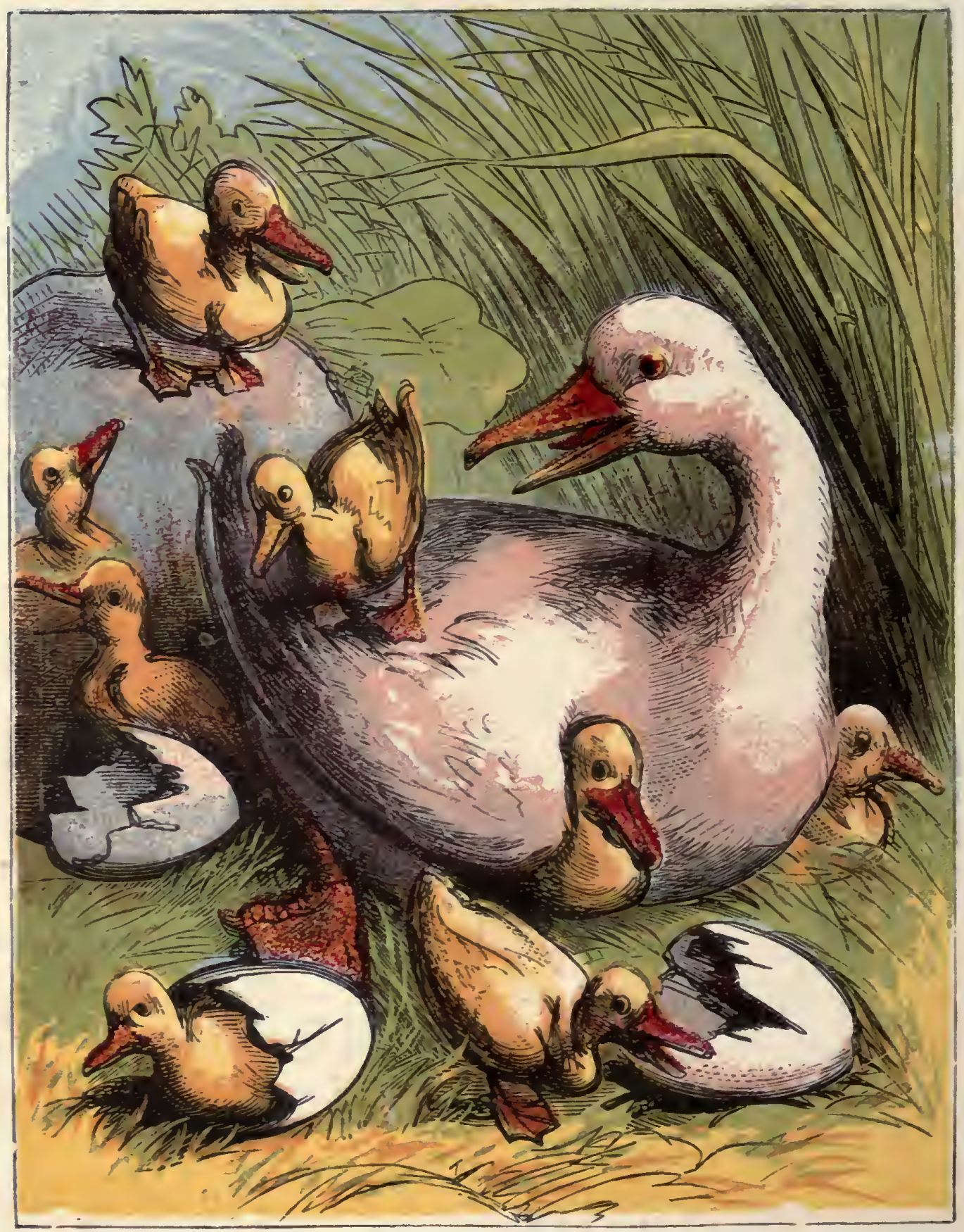
Close by the margin of the brook,
The old duck made her nest,
Of straw, and leaves, and withered grass,
And down from her own breast.

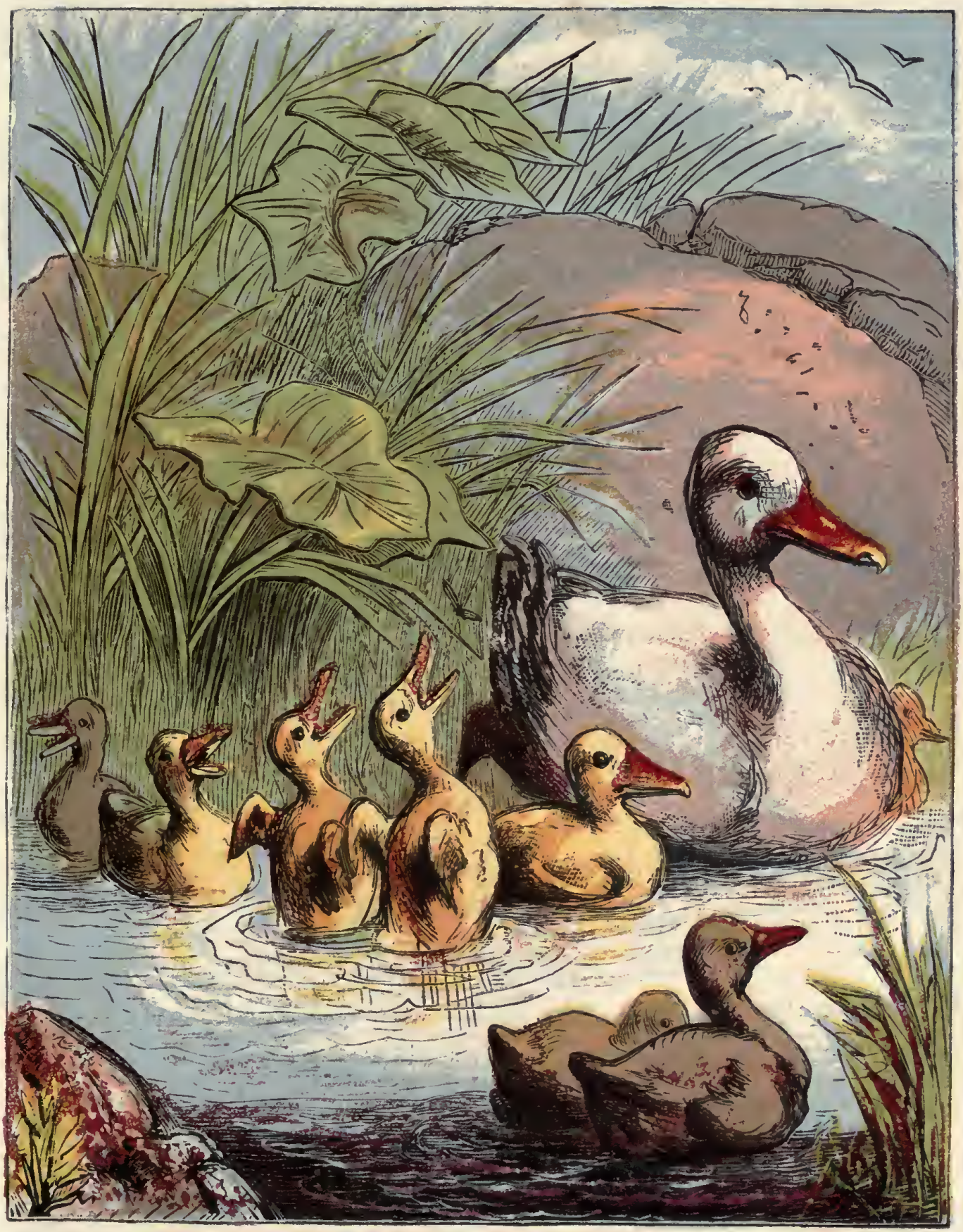
And there she sat for four long weeks,
In rainy days and fine,
Until the ducklings all came out—
Four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.

One peeped out from beneath her wing,
One scrambled on her back:
"That's very rude," said old Dame Duck,
"Get off! quack, quack, quack, quack!"

"'Tis close," said Dame Duck, shoving out
The egg shells with her bill,
"Besides, it never suits young ducks
To keep them sitting still."

So, rising from her nest, she said,
"Now, children, look at me:
A well-bred duck should waddle so,
From side to side—d'ye see?"





"Yes," said the little ones, and then
She went on to explain:
"A well-bred duck turns in its toes
As I do—try again."

"Yes," said the ducklings, waddling on:
"That's better," said their mother;
"But well-bred ducks walk in a row.
Straight—one behind another."

"Yes," said the little ducks again,
All waddling in a row:
"Now to the pond," said old Dame Duck—
Splash, splash, and in they go.

"Let me swim first," said old Dame Duck,
"To this side, now to that;
There, snap at those great brown-winged flies,
They make young ducklings fat.

"Now, when you reach the poultry-yard,
The hen-wife, Molly Head,
Will feed you, with the other fowls,
On bran and mashed-up bread;

"The hens will peck and fight, but mind,
I hope that all of you,
Will gobble up the food as fast
As well-bred ducks should do.

"You had better get into the dish,
Unless it is too small;
In that case, I should use my foot,
And overturn it all."

The ducklings did as they were bid,
And found the plan so good,
That, from that day, the other fowls
Got hardly any food.

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